

CHAPTER 2

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

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Figure 2-1 Columbia River Basin Local Jurisdictional Boundaries

CHAPTER 2: STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

2.1 Introduction

It is an understatement to say that there are a large number of agencies, governments, and organizations with a stake in the future of the Columbia Basin. For example, within the bounds of Washington State alone, there are state and federal agencies, local governments, tribal governments, irrigation districts, conservation districts, watershed planning units, public utility districts, special organizations, businesses, and residents (Figure 2-1). The Columbia River also flows through state and national boundaries. Canada and six other U.S. states have an interest in the river as an economic and environmental resource. Successful policy development in this context requires an aggressive outreach strategy as the Columbia River Basin Water Management Program (Management Program) is developed and implemented.

2.2 Comprehensive Communication Strategy

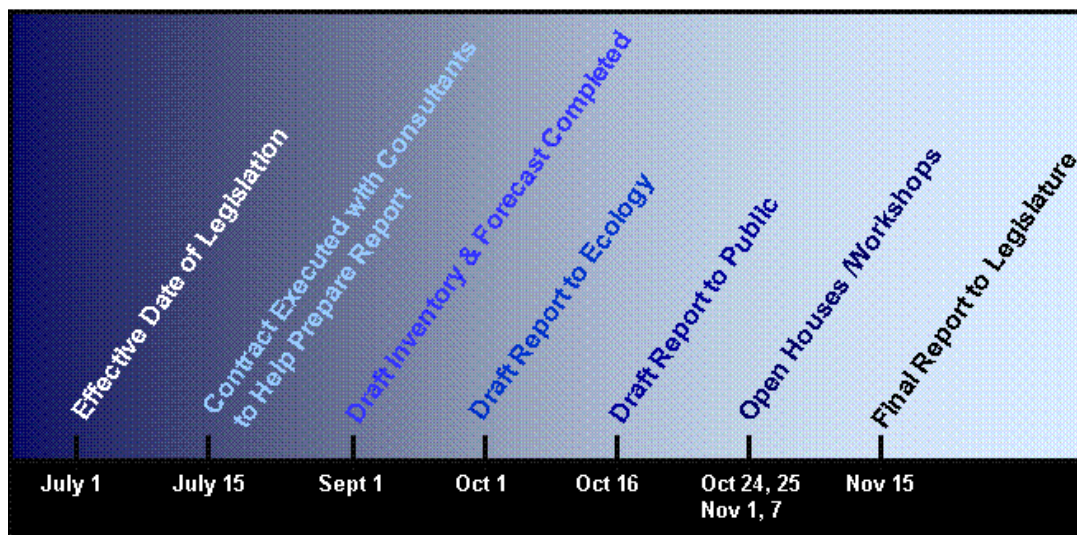
In recognition of the need to seek input from a large and vested audience, Ecology is developing a comprehensive communication strategy designed to allow stakeholders multiple points of entry into decision-making processes associated with the Management Program. Following the passage of the legislation in February 2006, Ecology has met “early and often” with governmental entities and key stakeholders in an effort to ensure that its initial implementation efforts were transparent and

consistent with the intent of the Legislature. Communication was an important part of Ecology’s goal for the Management Program even before the legislation became effective on July 1, 2006. By then, Ecology had developed a 12-Month Work Plan¹ which included outreach efforts to local and state governments, tribes, and other partners. Much of these early outreach efforts included discussion concerning the water supply inventory because it is expected that this inventory will yield the conservation projects that will enable new water right permits to be issued, while storage pursues a vital, but slower feasibility path.

Since the Columbia River Management Act provided Ecology only about four months to prepare the first legislative reports addressing project inventories and supply and demand forecasts, Ecology made a decision to contract portions of this work out to organizations rich with experience in matters of irrigated agriculture, municipal and industrial water supply and use, instream flow needs, and conservation. Specifically, Ecology relied upon the expertise provided by Golder Associates Inc., the Washington State Conservation Commission, and Washington State University. To make sure the project was completed within the timelines established by the legislature, Ecology developed a schedule for implementation of the legislative report.

¹

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/images/pdf/cr_12mo_plan.pdf.



Long-Term Supply and Demand Forecasting Report Completion Timeline

This report represents Washington's first effort to evaluate opportunities to develop water supplies for the Columbia River. It is also our initial foray into the business of forecast demand for water from the river. While much has been learned and accomplished since the passage of the bill, much remains to be done. It is anticipated that in 2007, Ecology will be able to better showcase initial Management Program successes and better communicate program objectives with the public. The factors associated with the anticipated improvement in performance in 2007 include:

- Hiring for the Program will be complete and staff trained to meet legislative objectives.
- The Programmatic EIS will be complete in February 2007, which will clarify the policy framework under which Ecology will implement the Management Program.

- Ecology will be implementing its communication strategy including a regiment of meetings with key stakeholders, an overhaul of its website to provide a portal into daily Columbia River activities, opportunities for the general public to be heard through open houses and workshops and development of multi-media outreach materials.

The following sections describe Ecology's public outreach efforts to-date and efforts it will make in the next year.

2.3 Policy Advisory Group

A key piece of Ecology's implementation strategy was to provide Columbia River stakeholders with a regular, structured point-of-entry into a conversation with agency staff during the initial startup. With this goal in mind the Columbia River Policy Advisory Group (PAG) was established and began a series of monthly meetings in August.

PAG members represent a combination of diverse Columbia River stakeholders. Ecology will rely upon PAG members to identify policies that must be addressed as the Management Program is implemented. The diversity of perspectives from the PAG is intended to provide Ecology with a range of perspectives on policy choices and priorities and assist Ecology in setting criteria for funding of storage and conservation projects. While membership in the PAG may change over time, currently the list consists of the following individuals, organizations and governments.

- John Stuhlmiller, Washington State Farm Bureau
- Merrill Ott, Stevens County Commissioner
- Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation
- Rob Masonis, American Rivers
- Gary Chandler, Association of Washington Business
- Jim Fredricks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Kathleen Collins, Water Policy Alliance
- Jon Culp, Washington State Conservation Commission
- Cindy Custer, Bonneville Power Administration
- Dick Erickson, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District
- Rick George, Umatilla Tribes
- Bill Gray, Bureau of Reclamation
- Bob Hammond, City of Kennewick
- Tony Grover, Northwest Power and Conservation Council
- Joe Lukas, Grant County PUD

- Mo McBroom, Washington Environmental Council
- Darryll Olsen, Columbia-Snake Rivers Irrigation Association
- Gary Passmore, Colville Tribes
- Lisa Pelly, Washington Rivers Conservancy
- Rudy Peone, Spokane Tribe
- Mike Schwisow, Columbia Basin Development League
- Teresa Scott, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Paul Wagner, NOAA Fisheries – U.S. Department of Commerce
- Rich Stevens, Grant County Commissioner
- Max Benitz, Benton County Commissioner

As of the date of this publication, the PAG has met monthly since August 2006 to discuss a range of implementation issues, including this report. Meeting information, agendas, meeting notes, and the PAG charter are available on Ecology's website. PAG meetings are published in advance on Ecology's website and are open to the public. During each meeting, an opportunity is given for the general public to share thoughts with the group and Ecology. The PAG is an important, but not exclusive piece of Ecology's overall outreach strategy. Ecology intends to utilize multiple opportunities for the public to be involved in shaping the Management Program.

2.4 Local Government

Local government has an important role in helping Ecology implement the Management Program. In May of 2006, Ecology began the

process of working with the Washington State Association of Counties to establish a Columbia River County commissioners forum to gather vital input regarding matters related to Management Program implementation. Ecology sought development of an ongoing relationship with County commissioners within the Columbia Basin out of respect for their role in watershed plan approval and implementation, salmon recovery plan approval and implementation, and local land and water use administration. Ecology administration has committed to attending monthly meetings with county commissioners to provide status updates on program implementation and to provide an opportunity for input and dialogue on Management Program implementation. Ecology has also discussed numerous specific conservation and storage projects with members of local government entities who have a vested interest in how the Management Program will affect their constituency.

Much of this report is about leveraging existing sources of data to develop a robust water budget for the Columbia and Snake River Basins. Local government has already collected much of the information necessary to support successful a water supply inventory and demand forecasting effort, including:

- Knowledge of specific conservation opportunities by County Commissioners, conservation districts and irrigation districts
- Land use and parcel information
- Information on projected demand needs

2.4.1 Watershed Planning

The Legislature has made a significant investment both in watershed planning and in the Columbia River Water Management Program. Ecology has been directed to harmonize these efforts as a part of implementing the legislation. To that end, Ecology:

- Has engaged the initiating governments for watershed planning through the PAG and through monthly County Commissioner meetings.
- Has used adopted watershed plans as a key source of information for this report.
- Has developed and implemented a training program for its watershed leads to carry out the Columbia River message to the planning units.
- Will continue to consult with watershed planning units in the future as other elements of the legislation (e.g., harmonization with proposed Voluntary Regional Agreements) are implemented.

2.5 State Government

While Ecology is charged with implementation of the Management Program under Chapter 90.90 RCW, implementation will have a large footprint on all of state government. For this report, Ecology has engaged in communication with a variety of state agencies that could best assist in contributing to the water supply inventory and the forecast of future Columbia River demand. In gathering such information:

- Ecology worked with the Washington State Conservation Commission to implement a contract for local conservation districts to supply information on conservation and storage

opportunities in the Columbia River Basin.

- Ecology met frequently with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to coordinate report goals and report on the status of the Columbia River water supply.
- Ecology partnered with the Washington Department of Health whose information on water system planning was useful in understanding municipal conservation opportunities and projected water system demands.

Ecology is currently in the process of conducting informational meetings with other key state agencies to build program cross-walks where the Columbia River goals overlap other state missions. Additional state partnerships with the Department of Natural Resources; Department of Agriculture; and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development are under development to ensure the success of the Management Program.

2.6 Federal Government

Ecology recognizes the key role that the federal government plays in the management of the Columbia River and demands on the river for both instream and out-of-stream uses, including the following agencies:

- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Bonneville Power Administration and Northwest Power and Conservation Council
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management

For this report, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau of Reclamation), has had the greatest amount of input in recognition of its role as a funding partner and study lead on the Columbia River and Yakima Basin storage feasibility studies, as well as its role in the Potholes Reservoir Supplemental Feed Route Project, and the Odessa Special Study Project, which are a central part of the water supply inventory. Ecology meets monthly with the Bureau of Reclamation to discuss and coordinate these projects. It should be noted that published information from the other federal agencies is critical to the Bureau of Reclamation's management of the Columbia River (see Chapter 3). As future legislative reports are developed and delivered, Ecology will strengthen its response to legislative mandates in regard to project inventories as well as demand forecasts.

2.7 Other State Governments and Canada

The Columbia River drainage basin includes seven western states (including parts of Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada) and British Columbia, Canada. Introducing the Management Program, as passed by the Washington State Legislature, into the existing multi-jurisdictional framework of state and provincial governments is a critical piece in improving the overall Columbia River system.

Ecology has existing partnerships and relationships with its sister states and continues to explore opportunities to connect with Canadian partners, which include agreements on how the river is managed (see Chapter 3). There has been interest from these parties on further collaboration as Ecology works to implement the Management Program. Oregon was helpful in providing information on the status of its demands, and Ecology plans to work closely with Oregon Water Resources Department to understand how that demand may change in the future. Idaho and Montana will also be important to future legislative reports because the Snake River drainage is the biggest tributary to the Columbia River.

2.8 Tribal Governments

Implementing a Management Program for the Columbia River would not be possible without our tribal partners. The following seven tribal governments were contacted as Ecology has worked to implement the Management Program and during the development of this report.

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Spokane Tribe of Indians

Four of the Tribes are also invited members of the PAG (Yakamas, Colvilles, Spokanes, and Umatillas). This legislative report describes the role that tribal reserved rights, usual and accustomed fishing rights, and hunting and gathering rights have on the Columbia River. Ecology plans to promote tribal involvement and partnerships as implementation of the Management Program continues.

2.9 State Legislature

This legislative report is the first formal status update on Ecology's progress in implementing the Columbia River Management Act. However, because this legislation is so sweeping in its scope, Ecology has been working closely with legislative staff over the last several months to make sure the intent of the legislation is being met. Ecology has attended monthly meetings with staff from both the House and Senate Republican and Democrat caucuses since the passage of the bill to provide updates on the Management Program.

Next year and annually by November 15th, Ecology will update the water supply inventory portion of this report. The goal is for Ecology to showcase the progress it is making in:

- Developing the comprehensive inventory of conservation and storage projects that will be used to meet future Columbia River demand.
- Improving the database of information used to make good water right permitting decisions.
- Funding and implementing specific projects each year.

On November 15, 2011, Ecology will update the water supply and demand forecast. Ecology will use the next 5 years to:

- Better understand characteristics of existing demands (paper vs. “wet water”).
- Coordinate existing monitoring and management tools for the river (e.g. stream gaging, metering, instream flow coordination, and watershed planning implementation).
- Better forecast future demands (e.g. agriculture, municipal, power, and instream flows).

2.10 Specialized Governmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Stakeholders

The list of stakeholders that are interested in the Columbia River Management Program is long. Ecology’s challenge is to be inclusive, and yet be productive. The PAG will serve as a useful forum to allow stakeholders to contribute to development of the Management Program. Additionally, Ecology has and will continue to reach out individually and by organization to involve stakeholders. Below are some examples of efforts conducted during this first year:

- Jay Manning, Director of the Washington State Department of Ecology, gave a keynote address at the Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association’s Columbia River Forum on July 20, 2006.
- Derek Sandison, Regional Director of the Central Regional Office of Ecology, gave a presentation to the Council of State Governments (West) conference on August 12, 2006 on the Columbia River Water Management Program.
- Tom Tebb, Section Manager of the Central Regional Office of Ecology, gave a presentation to the Washington Agriculture & Forestry Education Foundation Agricultural Issues Seminar on September 13, 2006 on the Columbia River Water Management Program.
- Derek Sandison, Regional Director of the Central Regional Office of Ecology, and Gerry O’Keefe, Ecology’s Columbia River Coordinator, gave a presentation to the Washington State Association of Counties Annual Conference on September 28, 2006.
- Derek Sandison, Regional Director of the Central Regional Office of Ecology, gave a presentation to the Washington State Chapter of the American Planning Association conference on October 5, 2006 on the Columbia River Water Management Program.
- Dan Haller, Columbia River Unit Supervisor, gave a presentation on this legislative report to the Policy Advisory Group on October 11, 2006 requesting feedback and attendance at scheduled open houses.
- Outreach to commodity commissions and agricultural associations (e.g. Washington State Potato Commission, Apple Commission, Cattleman’s Association, Washington State Farm Bureau, Northwest Food Processor’s Council, and many others) as part of WSU’s survey of agricultural demand forecasting.
- Watershed planning units, environmental groups, PAG members, members of Ecology’s Columbia River email listserv and other stakeholders were sent a direct mailing providing a description of our legislative report efforts and inviting them to provide input and attend scheduled open houses.

2.11 Public Outreach

Ecology has developed and implemented many public outreach tools this year to showcase the Management Program, including:

- Enhancement of its Columbia River website.²
- Development of a Columbia River email Listserv for regular updates on the program and this legislative report.³
- Development of focus sheets.⁴
- Scheduling of four open houses to solicit public comment on the report. These open houses were coordinated with the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to increase the exposure of the event.

Ecology invited the public to comment on this report from October 16 to November 1, 2006. Because of the time frame for this report identified by statute (RCW 90.90.040), the public comment and review period between the draft and final report was not as long as it will be in the future. Comments received during the report are provided in Appendix B and Ecology will thoughtfully consider these comments for inclusion in future legislative reports. Notice to the public for the comment period and open houses was provided on the Columbia River Water Management Program website and email distribution list (Listserv), by U.S. Mail, and via

²

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/crwmp.htm>

¹

³ <http://listserv.wa.gov/archives/cwp.html>.

⁴

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/images/pdf/crwmb.pdf> and http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/crwmp_qa.nda.html.

advertisements published in the Wenatchee World, Colville Statesman-Examiner, Columbia Basin Herald, and the Tri-City Herald. Public Service Announcements were also distributed to radio stations throughout the region.

Open Houses

October 24, 2006 4:00pm - 7:00 pm Big Bend Community College Advanced Technologies Education Center ATEC Rooms 1870 A and B 7662 Chanute St. NE Moses Lake, WA
October 25, 2006 4:00pm - 7:00 pm Agricultural Trade Center 317 West Astor Colville, WA
November 01, 2006 4:00pm - 7:00 pm Three Rivers Convention Center 7016 West Grandridge Blvd Meeting Rooms E and F Kennewick, WA
November 07, 2006 4:00pm - 7:00 pm Coast Wenatchee Hotel 201 North Wenatchee Ave Fuji Room Wenatchee, WA

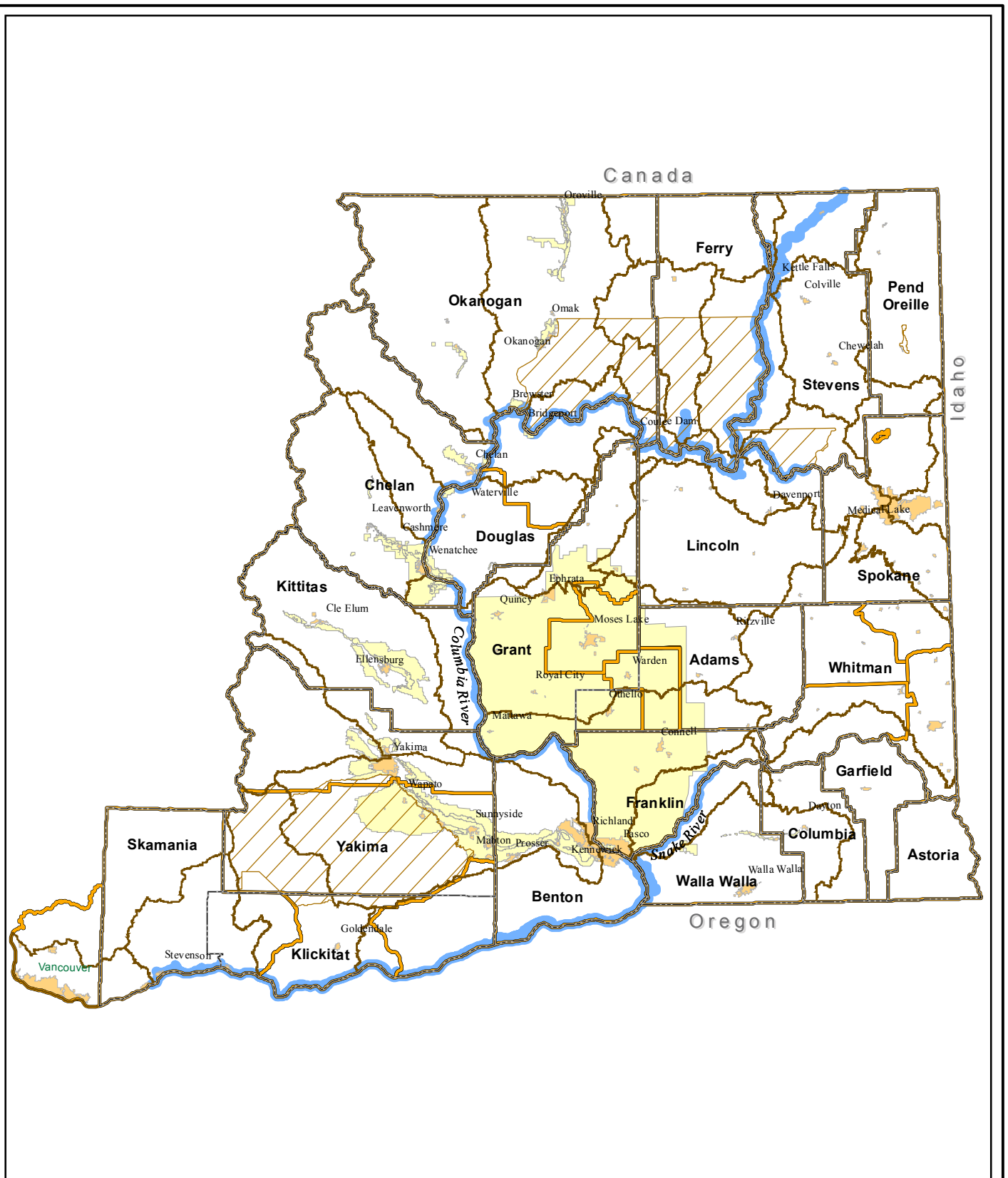
2.12 Next Steps

In many ways, this report tells us about the tools we have to work with as we implement the Management Program. It tells us how much water there is in the Columbia River now, how that has changed historically, and how it may change in the future. It tells us about how demand for water is likely to grow over time and where this growth will occur. It tells us what conservation opportunities we have, and how to consider the need for new storage to meet future demands.

If this report is the tool, then the Programmatic EIS is the choice on how to use that tool. Much can be derived from a plain reading of the

legislation. Yet policy choices remain, which will be answered in the Programmatic EIS (see Chapter 6, Policy Alternatives of Ecology, 2006b). The next major public involvement opportunity will occur in the spring when the Final EIS is released. Ecology plans to hold a Columbia River Summit to showcase the policy alternatives selected, how those alternatives will affect the Management Program, and what it means for on-the-ground implementation of the conservation and storage projects described in this report. Ecology plans to encourage public involvement in the summit.

FIGURES



LEGEND

- Highway
- River
- County Boundary
- WRIA Boundary
- Indian Reservation
- Irrigation District
- Conservation District

25 0 25
Scale in Miles

Map Projection:
UTM Zone 11, NAD 83

Source: WSDOE, USGS

This figure was originally produced in color. Reproduction in black and white may result in a loss of information.

FIGURE 2-1 COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN LOCAL

JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES
WSDOE/COLUMBIA BASIN WATER SPPLY/WA